

**Abstract**

Enzymes active in the hydrolysis of carotenoid esters have been obtained from *Pleurotus sapidus*. A particularly active enzyme has been identified having an isoelectric point of about 5.7 and a molecular weight of about 101kDA. A method of preparing carotenoid compounds from their respective esters comprises contacting the ester with the aforementioned enzyme. Carotene – comprising stains can be treated by the aforementioned enzyme, preferably followed by treatment with a conventional detergent or an enzyme active in cleaving carotenoids. A detergent comprising the aforementioned enzymes is also provided.